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Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

Proposed budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/539). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. The Security Council, by its resolution 1497 (2003) of 1 August 2003, declared its readiness to establish a United Nations stabilization force in Liberia. By a letter dated 4 September 2003, the Advisory Committee authorized commitments in the amount of $47,462,700 gross ($46,892,500 net) to meet the cost of initial critical logistical and personnel requirements of the operation in Liberia for the period from 1 August to 31 December 2003.

3. By its resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003, the Security Council decided to establish UNMIL for a period of 12 months, consisting of 15,000 United Nations military personnel, including up to 250 military observers and 160 staff officers, and up to 1,115 civilian police officers. The cost estimates contained in the proposed budget are based on the mandate of the Mission, as set out in resolution 1509 (2003), and on the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia (S/2003/875).

4. The Advisory Committee takes note of table 1 of the proposed budget, in which the time line leading up to the completion of the budget estimates of the Mission is given. **The Committee commends the Secretariat for the speed with which it prepared the budget estimates for this large and complex mission, as well as the quality of the presentation.**

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5. The Advisory Committee was informed that as from 1 October 2003, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/875, para. 114), the major functions performed by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia, which had been funded under the regular budget as a special political mission, had been transferred to UNMIL, together with the staff of the Office.

II. Proposed budget for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004

A. General comments

6. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the presentation of the budget estimates using results-based budgeting techniques and encourages further improvement, taking into account the views expressed by the Committee in its previous reports on peacekeeping operations (see, for example, A/57/772, paras. 37-56). In this connection, while the Committee recognizes the difficulties inherent in linking requests for resources to outputs and accomplishments, it reiterates its view that such a linkage is an essential element of the results-based budgeting concept (see para. 12 of the Committee's first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003[1] and A/57/772, para. 52) and requests the Secretariat to work towards that end.**

7. The Advisory Committee notes, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/2003/875, paras. 53 and 100), that the Mission is to include a mechanism for coordinating its activities with those of the humanitarian and development community and that it will also work closely with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and the United Nations Office for West Africa, as well as the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General is to have overall authority for the activities of the Mission and the United Nations system in Liberia (ibid., para. 53). **The Committee requests that an effective mechanism be established for the discharge of this "overall authority". The Committee further requests that information in this regard be provided to it in the context of the next budget estimates.**

8. **The Advisory Committee also requests that in future budget estimates, the mechanisms for effective collaboration and coordination be more clearly identified.** For example, the Committee was provided with supplementary information estimating requirements for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme at $35,484,550. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that it was actually a much larger programme involving the whole United Nations system, and that the $35.5 million represented the amount to be funded from the assessed peacekeeping budget (see also para. 21 below). **The Committee expects that, for its consideration of the next budget estimates, it will be provided with full information on these and other requirements, including support to be provided by specialized agencies and other United Nations entities. Further, the Committee trusts that cooperation and collaboration between the Mission and the relevant United Nations entities will be pursued at all substantive levels (see also para. 16 below).**

9. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the mandated close cooperation between UNMIL, UNAMSIL and MINUCI would lead to efficiencies that could result in savings.**

10. Under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on 18 August 2003, elections are to be held in October 2005. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the time frame for the completion of the mandate of UNMIL was expected to be within three years.

B. Resource requirements

11. Resource requirements for UNMIL for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 are estimated at $564,614,300, including budgeted voluntary contributions in kind totalling $120,000. Of the estimated requirements, $9,688,300 represents expenditures incurred by UNMIL for the period from 1 August to 30 September 2003, and $554,926,000 covers estimated requirements for the period from 1 October 2003 to 30 June 2004 (see A/58/539, sect. II.A). The budget provides for the phased deployment of 14,785 military contingent personnel, 215 military observers, 1,115 civilian police officers, including 360 formed police personnel, 607 international staff, 768 national staff and 286 United Nations Volunteers.

1. Military and police personnel

12. The estimate of $200,287,300 under military and police personnel is based on a phased deployment schedule, which provides for full deployment of 14,785 military contingent personnel, 215 military observers and 1,115 civilian police officers by 31 March 2004, and takes into account a delayed deployment rate of 35 per cent for all such personnel. **In the experience of the Advisory Committee, deployment schedules such as the one proposed for UNMIL often prove to be overly optimistic.** It is the understanding of the Committee that once troop-contributing countries have been identified, a lack of complete readiness on the part of those countries to deploy troops can often be a cause for delay. Delays can also be attributed to slowness on the part of the United Nations in the provision of logistical support.

13. The Advisory Committee was informed that the unit cost of rations for UNMIL was $6.40 per day. The Committee enquired as to why the cost was higher for UNMIL than for UNAMSIL, where it was budgeted at $5.75 per day, even though the same contractor was being used for both missions. The Committee was informed that UNMIL as yet had no contract for rations, and that they were being provided by the UNAMSIL contractor until an international bidding process could be undertaken. **The Committee therefore expects that savings will be realized under this item.**

2. Civilian personnel

14. The estimated requirements for civilian personnel for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004, which provide for a total of 1,661 staff (607 international staff, 768 national staff and 286 United Nations Volunteers), amount to $51,655,300 (see ibid., sects. II.A and B). The Advisory Committee notes that requirements have been adjusted by vacancy factors of 50 per cent for international staff and 30 per

cent in respect of national staff and United Nations Volunteers (ibid., paras. 134-136). The Committee further notes that the New York standard salary scale was applied to 70 per cent of proposed international staff. Staff costs for the remaining 30 per cent are based on salary scales for appointments of limited duration, with a 50 per cent reduction factored in with respect to common staff costs.

15. The Advisory Committee notes that the proposed organizational structure of UNMIL, much like that proposed for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), consists of numerous small sections and units with chiefs at the P-4 and P-5 levels, sometimes with very few staff for them to supervise. **The Committee reiterates its view that this tends to inflate the grade structure and can lead to duplication of functions.**

16. The Advisory Committee also notes a tendency in UNMIL to respond to aspects of the Security Council mandate by either creating separate units within the Mission to deal with them or translating the mandate into requests for staff and consultancy resources. For example, in paragraph 3 (r) of its resolution 1509 (2003), the Council decided that the mandate of the Mission should include assisting the transitional government in restoring the proper administration of natural resources, hence the requirement for two advisers on environment and natural resources (1 P-4 and 1 P-3) and two professional environment/resources officers (National Officers) mentioned in paragraph 66 of the proposed budget. **The Committee is of the view that the Mission should draw upon the expertise of other concerned United Nations entities and involve them in a coordinated approach to implementing the mandate rather than automatically translating every aspect of the Security Council mandate into requests for staff and consultancy resources.**

17. **The Advisory Committee requests the Secretary-General to review the organizational structure of the Mission with a view to streamlining it, taking into account the views of the Committee as expressed in the present report (see also the report of the Committee on MONUC, where a similar situation exists (A/58/447, paras. 30-37)). The results of that review should be reported in the next budget submission for UNMIL.**

18. **The Advisory Committee stresses the importance of the functions to be undertaken by the Legal and Judicial System Support Division, as outlined in the proposed budget (see A/58/539, paras. 48-53) and in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/2003/875, paras. 71-74). The Committee requests that a summary of the Mission's programme of work in this area be provided in the next budget submission.**

19. With elections planned for October 2005 in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, a small Electoral Unit consisting of four staff (1 P-5, 1 General Service and 2 United Nations Volunteers) is proposed for UNMIL (see A/58/539, para. 63). **While the Advisory Committee understands that the Mission intends to expand the Unit in the next budget period as elections draw nearer, it emphasizes that planning for the elections should be done well in advance.** Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Mission intended to employ 150 United Nations Volunteers to assist in the electoral process.

20. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the establishment of a Programme Planning and Assessment Unit in UNMIL in the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Coordination,**

Rehabilitation, Recovery and Reconstruction to assist other components in planning, monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects (ibid., para. 67). The Committee recommends that the functions of the Unit be expanded to cover the entire Mission, rather than limiting them to programmes and projects under the Deputy Special Representative.

21. The Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of the requirements for the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme, which amount to $35,484,550. Of that amount, $15,650,000 is related to rations. The Committee was informed that those costs could be reduced if the World Food Programme became involved in the programme. In this connection, the Committee recalls the statement made by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council that it was imperative that not only disarmament and demobilization, but also the initial phases of reintegration, be funded from the assessed peacekeeping budget (S/2003/875, para. 111).

3. Operational requirements

22. The overall estimate for operational costs for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 amounts to $312,551,700 (see A/58/539, sect. II.A).

23. The largest requirement under operational costs, accounting for $107,380,100, is for facilities and infrastructure. The Advisory Committee notes that delayed deployment factors have been taken into account in the estimated requirement for equipment (see A/58/539, para. 140). **The Committee requests that in future it be provided with a "deployment" schedule for all requirements under this heading that would give a clear picture of the time frame for procurement and logistical activities.**

24. The estimated requirements under air transportation amount to $65,428,000. As indicated in the proposed budget, the Mission is planning to maintain a fleet of 28 helicopters and 3 fixed-wing aircraft (ibid., para. 143). **As it has done in the case of other missions, the Advisory Committee requests UNMIL to explore the possibility of using aircraft already at the disposal of the United Nations, including MONUC aircraft, to transport troops that come from the region, rather than incurring further expense for additional aircraft.** The Committee notes that the proposed Mission air fleet includes a Beechcraft 200 to provide for movement of the head of Mission for liaison and negotiation purposes throughout the subregion and that the aircraft can be reconfigured to support medical evacuations. **The Committee welcomes this and requests that, should additional aircraft be deployed, care be taken to ensure that such aircraft are versatile.**

25. The Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of travel costs for both training and non-training purposes, amounting to $600,000 and $800,253 respectively. **With regard to non-training travel, the Committee encourages the Mission to make use of videoconferencing facilities where possible and to reduce the number of staff travelling to the same meeting. In order to reduce the cost of training-related travel, the Mission should attempt to identify training opportunities that are as close as possible to Mission headquarters.**

III. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee

26. The action to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNMIL for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 is indicated in paragraph 152 of the proposed budget. **In view of its comments in the present report, the Advisory Committee recommends appropriation of an amount of $564,494,300 gross ($559,284,300 net) for the operation of the Mission for the 11-month period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004, inclusive of the amount of $47,462,700 previously authorized by the Committee for the period from 1 August to 31 December 2003. The Committee further recommends that the total amount assessed for the period at this time not exceed $450 million. That amount should provide ample resources to cover military and police personnel costs should the deployment schedule as outlined in the proposed budget be fully implemented (see para. 12 above). The Committee will review the situation when it examines the estimates for the 2004/05 period.**

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/56/7).